1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

233 181 castrated later, are generally cut so that they will grow in a shape that pleases their masters. The operation, called *ngat*, is probably performed towards the end of their first year and usually takes place in the dry season, as it is said that a steer may die if its horns are cut in the rains. The animal is thrown and held down while its horns are cut through obliquely with a spear. They grow against the cut. The beasts appear to suffer much pain during the operation and I have sometimes heard Nuer compare their ordeal to the initiation of youths into manhood.

When a Nuer mentions an ox his habitual moroseness leaves him and he speaks with enthusiasm, throwing up his arms to show you how its horns are trained. 'I have a fine ox', he says, 'a brindled ox with a large white splash on its back and with one horn trained over its muzzle'—and up go his hands, one above his head and the other bent at the elbow across his face. In singing and dancing they call out the names of their oxen and hold their arms in imitation of their horns.

233 181 854 The attitude towards cattle varies with varying situations in social life and with changes in social development. As soon as children can crawl they are brought into close intimacy with the flocks and herds. The kraal is their playground and they are generally smeared with dung in which they roll and tumble. The calves and sheep and goats are their companions in play and they pull them about and sprawl in the midst of them. Their feelings about the animals are probably dominated by desire for food, for the cows, ewes, and she-goats directly satisfy their hunger, often suckling them. As soon as a baby can drink animal's milk its mother carries it to the sheep and goats and gives it warm milk to drink straight from the udders.

233 181 857 868 The games of rather older children of both sexes centre round cattle. They build byres of sand in camps and of moistened ashes or mud in villages, and fill the toy kraals with fine mud cows and oxen (Fig. 7), with which they play at herding and marriage. The first tasks of childhood concern cattle. Very small children hold the sheep and goats while their mothers milk them, and when their mothers milk the cows they carry the gourds and pull the calves away from the udders and tether them in front of their dams. They collect urine in gourds and

1: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1940
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

wash themselves in it. When they are a little older and stronger they have to clean the byres and kraals, assist in the milking, and herd the small calves and the sheep and goats at pasture.

FIG. 7. Mud figures of oxen decorated with tassels.

Food and play contacts with the cattle have changed to labour contacts. At this age the interests of the sexes in cattle begin to diverge and the divergence becomes more apparent as they grow up. The labour of girls and women is restricted to the byres and the kraals and is concerned mostly with the cows, while boys herd the calves at pasture, as well as assisting in the kraal,

2:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1951
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

581 831 to which all earlier activities of a sexual kind—play, love-making, and courtship—are a prelude, a preparation, and a means.

831 So long as there is no erotic behaviour in public, no inhibitions attach to sexual interests and their expression, and no one tries to hide from children the facts of sexual life, which they can learn by observing their elders and the flocks and herds among which childhood is spent. A boy who is seen by his elders in sexual play with a girl of his own age will merely be told not to act as though he had been initiated—he can do what he likes then—and at the most might receive a cut with a grass switch. No one considers his conduct immoral, and the older people will joke about such things among themselves.

857 581 831 Children start playing at marriage from the time they begin to walk, at first as uncomprehending observers of the games of older children and then as participants in them. They make cattle byres and huts of sand, and mud oxen and cows, and with these conduct bridewealth negotiations and perform marriage ceremonies, and they play at domestic and conjugal life, including sometimes in the game, I was told, imitation of coitus. In its earliest expression, therefore, sex is associated with marriage, and the first sexual play occurs in imitation of one of the domestic routines of married life. It occurs in response to a cultural, and not to an instinctive, urge.

Girls and boys, the girls rather earlier than the boys, begin to perform the simpler and lighter tasks of household and kraal from about the age of seven. From then onwards till they are about fourteen, marriage games continue when the children are by themselves, and though within them sexual play begins to be indulged in for its own sake and not merely in imitation of adult behaviour, it is subordinate to the whole make-believe relationship of conjugality of which it forms a part. During the rainy months the girls visit the boys in the grazing grounds, bringing them balls of porridge as presents, which each gives to the boy she has chosen as her 'husband'. She also milks the goats for her 'husband' and may even bring him a gourdful of cow's milk from the kraal. The boys cut millet stalks in the gardens and after roasting and eating the immature grain send the sweet stalks with their outer husks removed to their 'brides'. Older boys also send their juniors with mud oxen and cows to one of the senior girls, who plays the part of mother-in-law. I was told that in these games sexual intercourse may take place, but is neither a usual nor a prominent feature.

233 they may have to defend them against carnivorous beasts and human
512 raiders. Often they relieve the monotony and solitude by composing
[533] and chanting songs. Nuer say that most songs are invented in the grazing grounds. Herdsmen have a quick meal before leaving camp
[264] and, except when there are plenty of *heglig* fruits in the early part of the dry season, they will not have another bite till after sunset. However hungry he might feel no herdsman would milk a cow.

512 After the cattle have left camp the day is closed for the men,
462 as far as routine cattle tasks are concerned, till they are brought back to the kraal in the evening; but women and boys continue their
234 labours. Women milk the goats and sheep and prepare the morning
237 meal. Boys spread out the cattle dung that has collected overnight so that it may dry in the sun and furnish fuel to replenish the household fires at night. They also smooth the part of the kraal occupied by their beasts by rubbing over the earth the nightly residue of ashes, urine, and dung. Boys assist in milking the goats and in taking the small calves to shade. They then take the larger calves and the
[233] flocks to pasture. Older boys herd the calves and younger boys look after the flocks in the vicinity of the kraal. They spend most of the day playing games. If a small boy is hungry he catches a she-goat
[857] and milks it, holding it by the horns with one hand while he pats its udder and squeezes its teats with the other hand from which he then licks the milk. Or he may suckle it. People do not object to small boys milking the goats they are herding. They are small and hungry and need all the food they can get to grow into strong men.

512 Not all the adult men have been idle while their womenfolk
462 and the boys have been cleaning the kraal and milking. On most mornings parties of two and three leave camp at dawn with their
224 dogs to pick up a gazelle or other small animal. They do not return to camp till after milking is finished, and those who set out at dawn to inspect their giraffe traps return about the same time. After the cattle have been loosened the men potter about for a couple of hours. Generally some of them are engaged in making utensils and ornaments or in dressing their hair.

9:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1936 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

In this list there are only two cases where two generations are recorded, and though two cases are not adequate to show the normal number of age-sets which go to a generation I think that, nevertheless, these two are typical.

Thut	Caroah	} generation
Boiloc		
Maker		
Dangwaga	Cam	} generation
Luac		
Lilkjar	Wie	
Lilnyaang	Ngot	} generation
Ruob		
Wangdial	Rainen	
Rol		} generation
Pilual	Nhial	

It is not easy to describe the patterns of behaviour which operate between age-sets as they are of a very general nature. They are formally expressed in feasts when members of an age-set, or of two consecutive age-sets, eat together and apart from their seniors and juniors, or when members of an age-set purposely abstain from taking part in a feast when one of their members has died. But also in the daily life of village and cattle camp juniors show seniors deference in all situations which occur, in disputes, discussions, economic activities, etiquette, and so on. Father Crazzolara gives an example of this deference when he says "a boy has caught a fish, and an old man, a *ric*-comrade of his father, desires to have this fish and the boy must give it to him, and when his father, for whom it was intended, hears of this, he is glad that his son has such good manners."[1]

Age-mates are on terms of complete equality. They associate together in all activities of life, in work and war and leisure. A man does not stand on ceremony with an age-mate but eats and plays and jokes with him as an equal. When two men of the same *ric* are quarrelling, so long as their quarrel has not resulted in a serious fight, others ought not to interfere. I have often noticed that when small boys of about the same age are fighting with their spiked bracelets the men will laugh and encourage them, saying that they are of the same *ric*, that is to say, of the same age, but the womenfolk run to separate the boys and to take the part

[1] Hat ein Bursche einen Fisch erlegt und ein *Ricgenosse* seines Vaters wünscht ihn, so hat er ihm denselben zu geben; und wenn der Vater, für den der Fisch bestimmt war, davon hört, wird er sich über seinen guterzogenen Sohn freuen.

9:Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936)1936 FJ22 Nuer FJ22

of the lad belonging to their family. Age-mates are those who naturally associate together in any society in the world. Father Crazzolara writes "A kind of relationship springs up between the *Ric*-comrades, akin to close comradeship. According to the views of the people they belong to one another. When they live together or meet by chance, the meals prepared for the one or the other are eaten in common. In travelling *Ric*-comrades are natural hosts."[1] A man may address a fellow member of his *ric*, his age-set, as *ricda*, *da* being a suffix meaning " my."

Apart from this general pattern of egalitarian behaviour between members of the same age-set, their like mode of behaviour towards members of other age-sets, their common title, and their exogamous relations, there are a number of customs that ritually express their equality. The chief of these is the strict prohibition on any member of a dead man's age-set of partaking of the flesh of a beast killed at his mortuary ceremony. Anyone who broke this rule would inevitably die of *nuer*, the punishment which falls on those who break serious taboos.

Another custom allows a man of your age-set to ask you if anyone has claimed your daughter's eldest cow, and if you reply that no one has claimed it he will take a bracelet from off his arm and place it on the little girl's leg. When she is married he will then be entitled to claim the *yang rica*, " the beast of the age-set." It is important to note this custom in its relation to the rule that a man must not marry the daughter of an age-mate since the acceptance of any part of bride-wealth is recognition of an exogamous relationship between the people concerned. Further customs that express the social equivalence of age-mates are the rule which says that when two members of the same age-set have adjoining gardens they shall not erect the usual boundary-line of raised earth between them, and the custom which says that if a youth gets a thorn under his finger nail and has to cut it out all members of his age-set who are present ought also to cut off the tip of a toe nail as well. As we have seen at initiation feasts a man is permitted to joke and take liberties with the wife of a man of his own age-set. She is not a possible future mother-in-law, since a man cannot marry a daughter of an age-mate, whereas the

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 38. " Zwischen den *Ric*genossen entsteht eine Art Verwandtschaft, zunächst eine enge Kameradschaft. Beim Herumziehen, auf Reisen, geben Leute desselben *ric* womöglich zusammen. Wo sie zusammen wohnen oder zufällig zusammen treffen, wird das vorgelegte Essen des einen oder anderen immer gemeinsam genommen. Auf Reisen sind *Ric*genossen die natürlichen Gastgeber."

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

THE CHILDREN

857 The little children of the village spend their day in play, eating, and sleeping. The babies are often cared for by the grandmothers. The older children are called on to carry water or to help in some way. The older girl helps her mother in the routine duties of the day.

The little boy in the home plays games. He may have a cane-stalk and string for a fishing-rod and line, and sometimes a bent pin for a hook. When he is about eight years old he begins to herd the sheep each day. He often makes men and cattle out of mud and plays with them.

881 When he is old enough to have the tribal marks cut, his status is at once changed from that of boy to man. His privileges are also increased. He is now interested in securing cattle and sheep of his own.

857 538 524 The children love their folk-lore tales and the many animal stories that are told them by their elders. They believe these implicitly and fear the dreadful ogre that is usually the central figure of the story. They also amuse themselves by guessing riddles, of which they have a large number.

857 But while they are learning many things that are interesting and useful, they are learning many things they do not need to know. They learn to curse. They learn indecency in regard to sexual matters. Indeed, the child mind is full of many things that pollute both thoughts and actions. The lack of privacy in the village and family life account for much of this pollution of mind and action which infests the child. And there is no decidedly corrective method used by the elders of the village. Life was always so, it always will be so, they think.

THE NUER GIRL IN HER HOME LIFE

The life of a girl in the Nuer home is a foretaste of the life of the mother. The bulk of the work which can be done

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

by the children falls to her. When just a little girl she must take a gourd and carry water, learning to balance it on her head. She must help to care for the baby, carrying it astride one hip, with her arm around it. Cane-stalks must be brought for fuel, or she may accompany her mother when she goes to the forest to get wood. She gathers sticks of wood, binding them together with grass, and carries them home on her head. Or she may accompany her mother when she goes out to cut grass for roofing the houses. She early learns to carry her burden poised on top of her head.

As she grows older she learns to pound dura and to sift and cook it. She learns all the art of the Nuer housekeeper and, indeed, soon becomes a small replica of her mother.

The little girls play 'keeping house' and imitate their mothers to the best of their ability.

The older girls of the village usually have a house given them for sleeping quarters.

As the girl grows older she learns to smoke the family pipe and becomes as attached to it as her mother is.

When she is twelve or thirteen years old she begins to observe the age-old customs which until then she has been able to ignore. For instance, now she must never eat before a boy of her own age or older. Furthermore, she must never see him eat if there is any possibility that he may some day be a suitor for her hand in marriage.

She bleaches her hair and adorns her body with all possible ornaments. She dons her grass skirts and attends dances now. Her father and brothers are interested in giving her beads and other ornaments, for a well-favoured girl will bring more cattle when the marriage price is discussed. Her father and brothers are dictators as to what she may do and as to what plans may be made

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

for her future. She must do as they say or pay for her refusal by beatings from them. Her lot is not a pleasant one if her desires conflict with the plans of her father or brothers.

If she has been a victim of that dreadful tropical disease, yaws, and has any ulcer caused by it, her brothers may take her to the nearest medical aid—either to the Government or mission clinic—and seek healing for her, for they will be at a decided disadvantage in obtaining the marriage price they seek if their sister is still suffering from this disease and has unhealed ulcers.

Or she may have trachoma and may have suffered for years from trichiasis, and now they seek medical and surgical aid for this. What man will want a half-blind wife or be willing to pay any reasonable number of cattle for her? But when these physical defects are remedied, they may hope to get the usual number of cattle for her, and that, to them, is the major point.

Their sister must be physically able to bear a living, healthy child and regain her own health. Or, if she fail repeatedly in the first point or possibly fails to survive the ordeal of child-birth herself, her husband and his people may, and practically always do, ask for the return of the cattle which they paid as the marriage price.

So it is worth their while to invest the price of a sheep or two in securing physical health for their sister in order that she may bring them a greater number of cattle, and that her physical condition may not cause them to have to return the cattle they have received for her.

Her lot may be a most unhappy one if the man she loves has not the number of cattle her people desire or if they wish her to marry some one else. But if her health is good and her desires in regard to her future husband coincide with those of her family, her lot is a happy one.

14: Huffman M-5 (no date) 1931
FJ22 Nuer FJ22

Chapter Five

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE AND THE BABY

PREPARATION AND CHOICE

583 PROBABLY the most important event in the life of a Nuer girl is her courtship and marriage.

Her thoughts, even when a child, are upon her future husband, who he may be, what he may pay as the marriage price. Of course she often hears the village talk of how many cattle may be received for her. Sometimes her father or her brothers need cattle to help them out of financial difficulties incurred possibly through their own marriage plans. So they arrange the girl's marriage while she is yet a little girl and secure an initial payment of a cow or two in order to help them out. The husband does not take the girl to his village then but waits until she is older, and then he must pay the rest of the wedding price for her. Sometimes this man may be young, but more often he is an older man who has the cattle to help her father out of his extremity. And this older man may be planning to take her for his second or third wife, or possibly to get her for a wife for his son.

304 301 During her younger years she must have each ear pierced in from five to seven places along the outer edge, and she must have her upper lip pierced in the centre in order to wear a nail in it. When she is first taken to her husband's home white beads, as has already been noted, must be put in her ears, which will proclaim her status as a married woman to all who see her.

857 During her girlhood she must learn all the tasks that fall to woman's lot.

301 As she nears marriageable age she adorns her body with all the beads, anklets, wristlets, necklaces of various